

Beall's Pleasure
Landover, Maryland

Princess George

HABS No. *MD 1035*

HABS

MD.

17-LAND

1.

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Washington, D. C.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Delos H. Smith, District Officer
1707 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Addendum to:

BEALL'S PLEASURE
(Stoddert, Benjamin, House)
7250 Old Landover Road
Landover Vic.
Prince George's County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-635

HABS
MD
17-LAND,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HABS
MD
17-LAND,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BEALL'S PLEASURE

HABS NO. MD-635

Location: 7250 Old Landover Road, Landover, Prince George's County, Maryland

Significance: Constructed ca. 1795, Beall's Pleasure is an example of Federal architecture typical of central Maryland. The original owner of the land, Colonel Ninian Beale, helped establish the first Presbyterian Church in Prince George's County. The owner and builder of Beall's Pleasure, Benjamin Stoddert, was the nation's first Secretary of the Navy.

Description: Beall's Pleasure is a two-story brick house constructed ca. 1795 with a one-and-one-half story brick wing constructed in 1936.

The house is situated on a knoll at the back of well-kept grounds. Behind the house is a landscaped garden of large boxwoods set in four squares. Day lilies and roses are also prominent in the design. The garden was landscaped in 1936 by the late Boris V. Timchenko, long-time chief architect of the annual National Capital Flower and Garden Show and designer of gardens for President John F. Kennedy and Mrs. Mamie Eisenhower.

Beall's Pleasure is two stories high, five bays wide on the front and three on the rear, and two rooms deep. Laid in common bond, it has three courses of stretchers to each course of headers. There is a double interior chimney with parapets at each gable end. The chimneys and parapets are both capped with several courses of brick. The cornice is laid in three courses, the lower one of projecting headers, the center one of a sawtooth pattern, and the top one of stretchers.

The central doorway on the south facade contains a six-panel door with fanlight, and sidelights flanking the door. The fanlight has radiating wood muntins which divide the light into ten sections; an arched muntin divides each radiating section into two panes. Modern brick steps lead up to the front door. The windows on the front facade have six-over-six, double-hung sash and modern louvered shutters. There are jack arches above all the original windows, including those in the basement. The roof is covered with terracotta tiles, which replace cedar shingles.

The garden or north facade is three bays wide with a central doorway, which has paneled reveals and pilasters supporting an arched pediment with Adamesque motif. The windows on this facade contain nine-over-six sash and have jack arches, except for the east window on the first floor which has been enlarged to a pair of nine-over-six sash under a single segmental arch.

The west end wall of the house is blank except for a sixteen-light

casement window in the attic. On the east end of the house is a one-and-one-half story, three-bay addition that is one room deep; this was added in 1936. The fenestration of the east end wall of the main house consists only of a casement window similar to that on the other end; however, a doorway stood in the north bay of the first floor of this facade before the wing was added; it is now bricked up.

The floor plan of the main block consists of a central stair hall with two rooms on either side -- the dining room and study on the east and two parlors connected by a doorway on the west. All of these rooms contain fireplaces; those in the dining room and the parlors have original mantels of Adamesque design. The fireplace wall in the library is completely paneled, including a closet, and has shoulder architrave trim around the fireplace opening, framing the space above the fireplace, and around the closet door. The woodwork in this room appears to have been added to the house later; it may date from the 1930s. The woodwork, including chairrail and cornices in all four rooms and two round-arched cupboards in the north parlor, window glass, locks and other hardware, and random-width hard pine flooring, are original throughout most of the first floor. An elliptical arch with double keystone supported by pilasters spans the center of the hall. The hall has paneled dado and an open stairwell with two flights at the rear. The open string stair has carved stipends, very simple turned balusters, round handrail, and newel with return. Under the stair landing the rear door opens to the outdoors.

The floor plan of the second story is identical to that of the first. The four rooms have six-panel doors, cornices (simpler than those of the first floor), and mantels with fluted pilasters and frieze. The northwest bedroom has shouldered architraves around the door openings. The attic is reached by a steep flight of stairs between the west bedrooms.

Access to the basement stairs, which are beneath the first flight of the main stairs in the central hall, is gained through the library. The foundation walls and chimney bases in both basement rooms are built of stone to the first-floor level. The basement under the wing is entered from the main house basement.

In the 1936 HABS photographs of Beall's Pleasure, the windows on the front facade have two-over-two sash rather than the present six-over-six sash, although the rear facade has nine-over-six sash as it does now. A one-story, three-bay porch is centered on the south; it is very simple with four Doric columns. The rear door has no surround; the double window on the first floor at the east end is in place, but the wing had not yet been added. A small porch stood to the east where the presently brick-up doorway stands. A 1948 Rogers' family photograph of the house shows it with the wing, six-over-six sash on the front and with a small

portico over the door in place of the porch. (Traces of other porches can be seen on the south facade.)

Outbuildings:

1. Summer house--small screened structure with a brick floor and cedar shake roof, built in 1936.
2. Tool house--frame structure with cedar shake roof, built in 1936.
3. Carriage house--moved in 1947 and converted to a cottage, frame structure, very altered.
4. Old gas station--frame structure said to have been a gas station, apparently moved from Cheverly in 1945.
5. Chapel--James W. Rogers built this frame structure with parts of St. Ambrose Church, torn down in 1960 to make way for U.S. Route 50. The steeple, double doors, and stained glass windows of this chapel came from the church.
6. Tenant house--frame, 20th century, in bad repair (located right on the property line).
7. Well and pump house--constructed in 1936.
8. Fence--white picket fence with gates from Firwood, a ca.1850 house in Hyattsville torn down to make way for a count office building.

History: A patent for 500 acres called "Beale's Pleasure" was issued to Colonel Ninian Beale on July 10, 1706. Beale, born in Scotland in 1625, fought in the Scottish-English army raised to resist Cromwell. He was captured in the Battle of Dunbar and condemned to servitude in the British plantations, which included Ireland and the American colonies. Beale arrived in Maryland in 1658 and served out his term as an indentured servant with Richard Hall. He later was an Indian ranger and held several civil posts in Calvert, Charles and Prince George's Counties. He helped establish the first Presbyterian Church in Prince George's County, before he died in 1717.

After Col. Beale received the Beale's Pleasure patent, he sold portions of it and it was not until 1794 that the entire land grant was again owned by one person--Benjamin Stoddert, the builder of the present house. The house was built in 1795 as his country home. Three years later, President John Adams appointed Benjamin Stoddert to become the nation's first secretary of the navy. He was a prominent Georgetown merchant and married to Rebecca Lowndes, daughter of Bladensburg's leading merchant, Christopher Lowndes. After Benjamin Stoddert's death, the Beall's Pleasure property was maintained briefly by Thomas Gantt, trustee, and then passed on to Thomas Ewell, Stoddert's son-in-law and administrator of his estate. Ewell then sold the property to John and William Thomas. Due to some confusion over property title, the property was ordered to be sold in 1835. The property, including Gordon's Pleasure, Beall's Pleasure, and Waring's Lot Enlarged, 503-1/4 acres, and the

house Stoddert built were sold to Levi Sheriff for \$5,000. Sheriff died in 1854, leaving the property to his grandsons, George Beall Sheriff, Lemuel Levi Sheriff, Jr., and Dionysius T. Sheriff. The latter obtained the house in a suit that was settled in 1866. Sheriff mortgaged the house and 51-3/8 acres to George W. Berry; he paid this debt off by 1889, but in all the transactions over the next seventy-six years this acreage and the house remained distinct from the other Beall's Pleasure property. Sheriff sold the house in 1890 and it passed through a number of hands until 1933. In that year Brice and Sarah McAdoo Clagett purchased it from Kate Caufield of Colorado.

The Clagetts undertook considerable work on Beall's Pleasure, adding the present wing and a small entrance porch that is now gone.

On July 10, 1944, Brice Clagett and Sarah McAdoo Clagett, sold Beall's Pleasure, 51-3/8 acres, to Richard S. Huested and Constance Marlatt, his wife. On November 21, 1944, they sold the property to Anna C. Rogers and James W. Rogers. Mr. Rogers died in 1965, and as of 1992 Mrs. Rogers continued to live in the house.

Sources: Aleshire, William A., Robert F. Sellers, and James Maher(AIA). "National Register nomination: Beall's Pleasure", 1979. History Division, National Park Service.

Historian: Terra K. Klugh, HABS Historian, 1995.